

48th Assembly District

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NEWSLETTER

Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas, Chair, Democratic Caucus

Ridley-Thomas Brings Angelides, Westly to South L.A. to Talk Budget With the Community



State Treasurer Phil Angelides, Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas, and ADEC Empowerment Summit participant John Jackson enjoy a light moment en route to the Youth Health Initiatives workshop.



State Controller Steve Westly is greeted by Luis Marquez of NALEO, Sister Jennie Lechtenberg of Puente Learning Center and Assemblymember Ridley-Thomas before the ADEC Empowerment Summit on the State Budget.

Public Safety, Healthcare, L.A. NFL Return Discussed

Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas (D-Los Angeles) hosted a rare joint appearance by the State's two top elected fiscal officers, as State Treasurer Phil Angelides and State Controller Steve Westly addressed over 400 community members at the fourth annual 48th Assembly District Empowerment Congress Summit on the State Budget.

The Summit, entitled From Fine Print to Bottom Line: Shaping OUR Budget Priorities, was held at Orthopaedic Medical Magnet High School in South Los Angeles, and featured 90 minutes of straight talk and analysis of Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's proposed 2006-07 State Budget by the three major Democratic leaders.

"The Governor's New Year's budget promises California a happy, handsome future with \$222 billion in public works projects. But it is weak on just how that future will be delivered and whether he is prepared to listen to his legislative partners, even if it means changing his position," said Ridley-Thomas, Chair of the Democratic Caucus. "The Governor's 10-year time frame for these projects is not unreasonable. However, his plan relies too much on bonded indebtedness to finance these public works and not enough on tax revenues."

State Controller Steve Westly's analysis was

similar to that of Ridley-Thomas'. "The Governor's plan would bring more freeways, more pollution and more sprawl. I don't want California to adopt a budget that is pennywise and pound foolish," he said. "I think this summit is just what we need to create a statewide discussion about housing, hospitals, mass transit and parks. These elements are lacking from the Governor's proposal."

In addition to offering the 48th Assembly District constituents an overview of the state's budget process, the Empowerment Summit provided informational workshops on becoming active participants in the process, youth and senior oriented health initiatives, and local economic development potential provided by the anticipated return of a NFL franchise to the Los Angeles Coliseum. Representatives from a broad spectrum of neighborhoods and local organizations participated in the workshop discussions, each of which featured a constituent question and answer session with Assemblymember Ridley-Thomas.

"This is a time to organize and to raise our voices," State Treasurer Phil Angelides said to applause from a very motivated audience. "The governor's rate of borrowing for public works projects over the next decade is actually lower than what the state has been spending since 2000. If the Governor continues to block any new tax increase, even that limited level of public works spending would have a far bigger effect on the budget than the Governor has acknowledged."

Remembering



"Coretta Scott King was a pioneer in a movement that changed America. We owe her memory our highest honor. My wife Avis, sons Sebastian and Sinclair and I mourn the passing of this extraordinary woman. The most fitting tribute we could pay Mrs. King would be for all of us to rededicate ourselves to the achievement of those principles for which she stood: nonviolence, empowerment and civil rights for all."

Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas served 10 years as Executive Director of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference of Greater Los Angeles, the local affiliate of the national civil and human rights organization founded by the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



Delegation from the Koreatown Multipurpose Senior Center enjoys a visit and photo with their Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas at the January 21 ADEC Budget Summit.

To view the complete ADEC Budget Summit photo gallery visit the ADEC website at www.ADEC48.org

Legislation To Help Those That Provided Assistance To Hurricane Katrina Victims Passes Assembly

Legislation that would help Californians with the costs of providing immediate shelter to those displaced by Hurricane Katrina has gained momentum, as Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas' (D-Los Angeles) Natural Disaster Tax Relief Credit Act (Assembly Bill 912), sailed off the Assembly Floor with unanimous bipartisan support (79-0). The measure now heads to the Senate for consideration.

Assembly Bill 912 is sponsored by State Controller Steve Westly, who is also Chair of the California Franchise Tax Board. The legislation would create a tax credit for California tax payers who provided housing assistance for those displaced by natural disasters like Hurricane Katrina.

"This legislation is for all Californians who have extended housing to those in the Gulf State region displaced by Hurricane Katrina," said Ridley-Thomas. "Californians have a long tradition of helping our neighbors who face devastating tragedies and disasters and state tax policy should recognize their generosity and compassion."

The bill will establish a tax credit of \$100 per person, with a maximum of \$400 in any given year to individuals who provide free housing for at least sixty consecutive days to persons displaced by Hurricane Katrina, as well as subsequent federally qualified natural disasters. The tax credit will remain in effect only until January 1, 2011, and as of that date will be repealed.

The Birth of Black History Month



The roots of Black History month can be traced to the early part of the 20th century. In 1925, Carter G. Woodson, an educator and historian began campaigning among schools, journals and Black newspapers calling for a 'Negro History Week' to be celebrated. The week would honor the importance of Black achievement in and contributions to the United States of America. Woodson was able to institute the 'Negro History Week' in 1926 during the second week of February, to coincide with Abraham Lincoln's and Frederick Douglass' birthdays. Woodson was awarded the prestigious Springarn Medal from the NAACP for his accomplishment. In 1976, Negro History Week grew to become Black History Month as we celebrate today.

I would invite persons of every age and race to join in this celebration, and I encourage you to learn about African American history makers in the State of California.

Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas
48th Assembly District
Democratic Caucus Chair

The Passing of Lou Rawls, A True Pioneer



Lou Rawls was the headliner at Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas' 2003 Juneteenth celebration. They were joined backstage by commentator Tavis Smiley and Assemblymember Rebecca Cohn.

From gospel and early R&B to soul and jazz to blues and straight-up pop, we have lost a true friend and legend in the passing of Lou Rawls. Lou was a consummate master of African American vocal music whose

versatility helped him adapt to the changing musical times over and over again, while always remaining unmistakably himself. Blessed with a four-octave vocal range, Rawls' smooth, classy elegance -- sort of a cross between Sam Cooke and Nat King Cole -- permeated nearly everything he sang, yet the fire of his early gospel days was never too far from the surface. Lou capped the most commercial phase of his career with a productive stint with the "Philly Sound"

Assemblymember Ridley-Thomas Welcomes Three New Staffers

Yet another highlight of the January 21st Empowerment Summit was Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas' introduction of the three newest members of his staff.

Fernando Ramirez joins the Capitol office staff as an Assembly Fellow. Fernando is a native of Los Angeles. He attended UC Santa Barbara where he majored in Chicano/a Studies and Political Science. While at UCSB, Fernando was involved with student government organizing around issues of access to higher education and social justice. After his first year at UCSB he interned in Washington D.C. through the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute and worked in the office of Congressman Adam Schiff (D-Glendale).

New to the district office are intern Lisa Flores and Field Representative Juan Alvarez. Lisa comes to the 48th AD via the Pat Brown Institute of Public Affairs at California State University, Los Angeles on a Public-Policy Internship program. Her educational background includes a Bachelor of Arts degree in Liberal Studies at Cal State L.A. where



New staffers (from l to r) Juan Alvarez, Fernando Ramirez and Lisa Flores join Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas during the ADEC Empowerment Summit on the State Budget.

she is currently completing studies on a Masters of Arts degree in History with specialization in the fields of Early and Modern America, and Latin America.

Juan Alvarez joins the Assemblymember's office as a Field Representative in charge of Latino outreach. Currently pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree in Public Policy at U.S.C., Juan also is serving an internship in the office of Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa. This past summer, Juan served an internship in Washington, D.C. through the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute

Invest in a Cure for Breast and Colorectal Cancers



Last year, Assemblymember Ridley-Thomas authored Assembly Bill 819 which created a tax check-off box specifically for colorectal cancer research on the state income tax form. The bill was sponsored by the Stennis Family Foundation and signed by the Governor.

When filling out your State tax return form please be advised that you can support both colorectal and breast cancer research by checking the appropriate box on the form. It's simple and effective and automatic.